

GEOGRAPHY WALK.

FRIDAY, 12TH APRIL, 1907.

Miss Williams started with the ex-students at 2-30, and took us into the Church fields, where we sat on a low wall by the Stock near the little bridge. Here Miss Williams told us about the history of Ambleside.

The origin of the name is supposed to be Ammel's Seter, or the settlement of Ammel, a Norseman. His coming is not recorded in history; but it is known that Harold Fairhair led an invasion of Northmen who made raids into Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Hebrides; and it is possible that Ammel was a Viking who fled from the Isle of Man to Cumberland to escape from him.

There are three ways by which Ammel might have approached: (1) by the Wrynose Pass; (2) by Dunmail Raise; (3) by Morecambe Bay. When he arrived he would have found the remains of the Roman Camp at the head of the lake (there were remains 400 years ago in what is now the football field). The Stock and other smaller streams meandered through what are now the Church fields, but were then covered with swamp and forest. The rocky knolls were also a feature then as now. The first dwellings of Ammel's settlement probably lay huddled about the North Road (where are Middleton's and Coffee's shops).

We know that in the 10th century Athelstan was in Ullswater, and he may have marched through this settlement to get there. In 945 Edmund marched through to Dunmail Raise, and probably took the Roman Road passing through the neighbourhood.

There is no name of Ammel's Seat till 1275. We hear of the Forest of Rydal, and the Forest of Troutbeck, which belonged to the barony of Kendal. This barony passed through the hands of several Norman knights, and after a time was divided between Alice and Heloise de Lancaster. Troutbeck forest fell to Alice, who married a Lindesay, and

it remained in their family till the reign of Edward III. Afterwards it was given to the great Duke of Bedford, and later to the Duke of Somerset. During the Wars of the Roses it belonged to the Earl of Richmond, and for a time to the Parr family (Katharine Parr, Queen of Henry VIII.), who had a seat at Kendal Castle. Then the Earl of Richmond recovered it, and it belonged to the Crown. Charles I. gave it to Katharine of Braganza, and finally it was sold to the Lowther family to whom it still belongs. Lord Lonsdale still receives small rents.

In 1324 there were eleven tenants in Ammelseat paying rent to the amount of £12 4s. 3½d., and there was a corn mill which paid 8s.

In 1403 there were twenty-eight tenants, and the value of the manor had increased to £28.

The feudal system was retained here for a longer time than in other places owing to the frequent raids of the Scots. They entered the valley from Dunmail Raise and by Troutbeck along the Scot's Rake. It is owing to the continuance of the feudal system that the small landowners, called "estatesmen," have survived.

When James I. became King he tried to take away their rights, but failed.

In the reign of Charles II. there were 321 large timber trees fit for ship-building which he wanted to take, but was obliged to withdraw his demands.

In the Middle Ages there was ploughed land in the valley which gave agricultural employment, and higher up the ground was used for pasture and grazing.

There was no mill till 1324, and in 1343 there was a fulling mill, and later as many as five mills on the Stock.

As we walked through the town Miss Williams pointed out How Hall, the oldest house in Ambleside, facing St. Anne's Church. It has a deeply recessed doorway, very thick walls, and wooden beams over the windows. The first school was near it in the Wasp's Nest. It was founded by Miss Clough, who lived in Mrs. Boyle's house.

There were Churches at Grasmere and Windermere, but it was not till 1597 that a chapel was built on the site of St. Anne's Church. On White Moss is a how stone, which was used for resting the coffin during a funeral procession to Grasmere.

Ambleside Hall stood on a triangular piece of ground between the North Road, the Stock, and the Inn.

The Scale How grounds were formerly pasture, and the old road followed the line of the North Road, Nook Lane, and Scale How Drive.

MERCURY

("THE SQUINTING LACQUEY OF THE SUN").

To those who take an interest in that delightful and awe-inspiring study, astronomy, Mercury must present a fascinating subject this year, chiefly on account of its transit over the Sun, which occurs on November 14th, 11 a.m. to 12-45 p.m. But even to those who know little and care less, a few notes about this interesting, though shy, member of our solar system may not be unwelcome.

Carlyle has said, "This world, after all our science and sciences is still a mystery—wonderful, inscrutable, magical, nay more to those who will but think of it;" and if this be true of our Earth, of which we know, or rather, think we know so much, what should be said of Mercury or any other of the planets of which we know relatively nothing?

Mercury, on account of his nearness to the Sun, is seldom well placed for observation, although according to Denning, the observer who perseveres should succeed in finding the planet at least twelve times a year. June 25th will be a good day for observations, as Mercury sets one-and-a-half hours after the Sun on that date.

Of the discovery of Mercury little is known, but it is certain that astronomers who lived as early as 265 B.C. knew of his existence. We cannot do better than refer to "The Story of the Heavens," where Sir Robert Ball says, "We can easily imagine how the discovery of Mercury was made in the clear skies over an Eastern desert. The Sun has set, the brief twilight has almost ceased, when lo, near

that part of the horizon where the glow of the setting Sun still illuminates the sky, a bright star is seen. But surely, the careless observer might say, there's nothing wonderful here; is not the whole heaven spangled with stars? Why should there not be a star in this locality also?

"The primeval astronomer will not accept this explanation. He knows that there is no bright star at this place in the heavens. If the object of his attention be not a star, what can it be? Eager to examine this question the heavens are watched next night, and there again, higher above the horizon, and more brilliant still is the object seen the night before. . . . After a few nights of exceptional splendour the lustre of this orb declines. The planet again draws near the horizon at sunset, until at length it sets so soon after the Sun that it has become invisible."

Perhaps the primitive astronomer considered the planet lost for ever, and it must have taken much patient observation before he realized that all the appearances were to be attributed to the same planet. Once firmly convinced of this, however, prediction as to Mercury's various appearances became possible; and when the planet appeared in accordance with these predictions, his discovery was placed on a foundation as firm as that of Jupiter.

Mercury possesses a most eccentric orbit and circles round the Sun at a mean distance of 36,000,000 miles. There are many speculations as regards the materials which compose this small globe; but whatever they may be, they are certainly less dense than those composing our own globe, for the bulk of Mercury is one-nineteenth of that of the Earth, while its weight is only one-thirty-sixth.

The famous Italian astronomer Schiaparelli discovered that Mercury's period of rotation on its own axis is the same as its period of revolution round the Sun. If this be true the planet must always present the same face to the Sun, one hemisphere being subject to perpetual heat and the other to perpetual cold.

The transits of Mercury are of rare occurrence, and therefore very interesting. The first recorded observance is November 7th, 1631. This transit was predicted by Kepler four years beforehand, and observed by Gassendi only five hours after the stated time. During transits certain curious

appearances have been noticed; for example, the planet seemed to be surrounded by a curious halo, and marked with a bright spot on its surface. Some think such appearances mere optical illusions, and as yet no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming. Mercury therefore presents us with a subject for deep study and observation; and anyone who is able to view the transit on November 14th through a *good* telescope is greatly to be envied.

It may be that these few notes about this planet, of which we know so little, may stir up some enthusiasm and a desire to know more, in those observers who have as yet been unsuccessful in their efforts. There can be no more delightful occupation than the observance of the heavens, whether the search be for constellations, stars, or planets; and it is surely important that children should obtain some idea of the immensity and infinity of space, the distances and sizes of the stars, the positions of the planets, so that they may not grow up thinking as did the ancients, that our little world is the centre of the universe.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.
Think you this world of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres."

Tennyson.

STUDENTS' LETTER.

DEAR EX-STUDENTS,

We are all so pleased the "L'Umile Pianta" is going to appear every month, and we hope we shall always have something of interest to tell you.

This term a great deal has happened—first and foremost the Old Students' Conference. The present inhabitants of Scale How were delighted to make the acquaintance of some of their predecessors. On the Friday evening we had a dance, and on the Saturday afternoon to end up there was a Schumann Recital.

We all enjoyed having the old students to tea parties on the Sunday afternoon, and were most amused to hear all the tales of bygone days, especially of the various cookings of dead animals which took place in the bedrooms. We also enjoyed seeing them running in and out, and listening to their opinions on the changes that have happened to Scale How since their day.

We are sure you will rejoice with us over the happy results of the Sloyd examination. There was great excitement when we heard we had all passed, and four with distinctions. But alas! we are afraid we cannot say so much for the Hygiene, which was followed the next week by the Botany; and that night, for the benefit of Mrs. Franklin, the Juniors gave their entertainment, which we were very disappointed to miss.

On half-term Saturday we had a fancy dress dance. Miss Mason considered that it was one of the best fancy dress dances there has been for some time past, as the characters were most of them out of the common. Perhaps you would like to hear a few:—The Old Woman who lived in a Shoe danced quite gaily in her shoe, in spite of the fact that she had so many children she did not know what to do.

Civilization was represented by a Suffragette; Barbarism by a Negress.

The representative of the Colonial Conference wore a white dress with flags, a red sash bearing the name, and neatly drawn maps of the Colonies.

Little Red Riding Hood was accompanied by a most fearsome wolf, which was dressed in a very realistic costume, and was attacked in the course of the evening by two American Indians.

On the Monday Helvellyn seemed to be the favourite attraction. Nothing like the number of flowers were found this year at Furness as last. Four ambitious spirits climbed Scafell Pike; on the top they were caught in a severe snowstorm.

We again have had the pleasure of having a visit from Mrs. Franklin, who gave us a short, but interesting account of the Conference, which has just taken place in London. This time she was accompanied by Olive and Cyril who seem to thoroughly enjoy their holiday, especially Cyril, who had never been here before.

On Wednesday, 22nd, we were assembled in great haste to hear Baron Ki Kutchi, who told us most interesting facts of his own country, especially mentioning the wonderful revolution.

We are all looking forward to Mr. Thornley's visit, which we hope will be soon. The gardens are beginning to look quite presentable.

The Juniors have begun Criticism Lessons and School, which they seem to enjoy. We have at present the privilege of a visit from Mrs. Dallas Yorke, who arrived on Saturday afternoon.

THE SENIORS.

NATURE NOTES.

25TH MAY, 1907.

There are nine more flowers on the list to-day, than on the one up to May 25th of 1906. The buds when they burst made rapid progress, after being kept back for so long by the snow, wind, and rain of March.

We had our half-term holiday last Monday—Whitsuntide. Yellow water ferns were brought back from Ferry, the cross between rivale and urbanum.

A party party climbed Helvellyn, and found star saxifrage (*saxifraga stellaris*) and scurvy grass (*cochlearia officinalis*).

The banks along the Terrace where the squills are growing, are just now blue with their blossom.

NOTES ON CRITICISM LESSONS.

After a reading lesson to Class Ia Miss Mason asked particularly that the children should use the sounds of the letters to find out new words. The look and say method should only be used for unphonetical words.

The pictures in the Happy Reader must not be referred to either in teaching new words, as it takes away the children's attention, and it generally leads to guessing.

A darning lesson was given: in such lessons the children should be told exactly what is to be done, how to hold their work, and how many threads to take up. The lesson should be looked upon as a kind of drill carried out to the word of command.